

NEBRASKA SUPREME COURT



Office of Public Information

Contact: Janet Bancroft | (402) 471-3730 | jbancroft@nsc.state.ne.us

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 16, 2007

Scott Carlson, Statewide Coordinator for Problem-Solving Courts, Receives Governor's Proclamation Designating May as National Drug Court Month in Nebraska

(Lincoln, Neb.) A public proclamation signing ceremony was held on May 16, 2007 in the Warner Legislative Chamber of the State Capitol declaring May as Drug Court Month in Nebraska. The proclamation, signed by Governor Dave Heineman, was presented to Statewide Coordinator for Problem-Solving Courts, Scott Carlson who accepted on behalf of the seventeen drug courts across Nebraska.

Nebraska currently has a variety of drug and problem-solving courts in over half of the twelve judicial districts across the state. Seventeen adult, juvenile, and family drug courts along with other problem-solving courts can now be found in courthouses from Gering to Omaha, with four more currently under development.

Like many of the over 1,900 operational drug courts in the United States, Nebraska's drug courts hear cases of offenders charged with drug-related crimes. The drug court relieves already overwhelmed court dockets, placing offenders in an environment where they undergo treatment and counseling, submit to frequent and random drug testing, make regular appearances before the judge and are monitored closely for program compliance. Graduated sanctions, including jail time, are imposed for noncompliance. Conversely, incentives are applied for continual compliance.

According to the Governor's proclamation, May has been designated as Drug Court Month in honor of the judges, prosecutors, defense attorneys, substance abuse treatment and rehabilitation professionals, law enforcement, probation and other supervision personnel, researchers and educators and community leaders who have dedicated themselves to the drug court movement – all of whom have had a profound impact on the court system and their communities.

Since their inception, drug courts have enjoyed bi-partisan support as a result of the phenomenal success rates and national attention they have received. By leveraging the coercive power of the criminal justice system, drug courts can alter the behavior of non-

violent, high-risk drug addicted offenders through a combination of judicial supervision, case management, mandatory drug testing and treatment to ensure abstinence from drugs and escalating sanctions.

This year's "National Drug Court Month" marks 18 years of drug courts in the United States. From the first drug court in Miami in 1989, the movement emerged. In 1994, there were 12 courts; as of December 2006, there were over 1,900 operational drug courts. The success of the drug court system is well documented. More than 70 percent of drug court participants have successfully completed the program or remain as active participants, and the cost of drug court programs are significantly less than the cost of incarceration in the traditional court system.

#

Janice K. Walker, State Court Administrator
Administrative Office of the Courts | P. O. Box 98910 | Lincoln, NE 68509-8910